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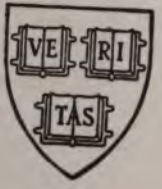
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The Island of Anarchy

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The Island of Anarchy.





The Island of Anarchy.

A Fragment of History in the 20th Century.

BY

E. W.

"Bind thyself with one cord."



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THE ISLAND OF ANARCHY.

CHAPTER I.

"As for my particular, I am verily perswaded, that since that age (thirtie yeares), both my spirit and my body have more decreased than encreased, more recoyled than advanced. It may be that knowledge and experience shall encrease in them, together with life, that bestow their time well: but vivacitie, promptitude, constancie, and other parts much more our owne, more important, and more essentiall, they droope, they languish, and they faint."—MONTAIGNE (*Florio's translation*).

THE ending of the nineteenth century, like that of the eighteenth, was a time of terrible and

strange things, as if it were coming to be the law of human affairs that the sunsets of the centuries should be red with a "Terror" and and dark with despair.

In England—then, as in the past, the refuge of banished men—social disorder reached a height that would soon have driven all her quiet dwellers to seek more peaceful homes on the other side of the globe, had not a new and strange thing changed the whole aspect of affairs.

It began to be perceived, and was soon widely acknowledged, that the cause of the great weakness and futility of our government lay in the advanced age of

those by whom the most important offices were held. Age is wont to trifle, to take things lightly, and to study life, of which it can at best hope to possess so little, from a frivolous and temporary point of view.

"Things are well enough as they are," say they; "a little tinkering here, a little fancy legislation there, and they will last our time; meanwhile, let us hear ourselves talk."

The only wonder now seemed that the world had been so slow to perceive this, that it had taken the human race so many thousand years to discover a truth which now seemed as simple and patent as the

converse one, that it would not be wise to entrust grave affairs to children in their first decade.

And so the younger men of England, by a sudden and united effort at the general election of 19—, secured the return of a House of Commons containing no man over the age of thirty-five, and no woman: (for women had begun to come in and to make matters worse).

This House of Commons, strong, in earnest for real work, and not divided by Party, that frivolous pastime of politicians who were too old for other games, passed without difficulty a wise "superannua-



tion law." And the government of the country, thus at last able to govern indeed, made the almost foundering ship of our unhappy State once more answer to the helm, and steered for that haven of peaceful order and settled rule which men remembered sadly as a lost Paradise or longed for as an undiscoverable "Atlantis."

That *laws are made to be obeyed* had glided in those days from the place of a truism into that of a fallacy. It was the first principle of the new Cabinet.

To two classes this principle had to be made clear —Criminals, or law-break-

ers; Anarchists, or law-deniers.

Of the first of these we will speak first. It will now hardly be believed that there existed at that time in England what were called "the Criminal Classes"—thousands of men, women, and children known to be living in the continual commission of crime, as other people are engaged in commerce, husbandry, and the like, spending much of their time in prison, and never doing or desiring any honest work.

This state of things the young government set themselves to bring to an end.

Instead of progressing



towards that universal slipshod leniency which the philanthropists of an earlier time had set before themselves as a goal—with capital punishment evaded for awhile and eventually abolished,—these rulers, with all the ruthless severity of youth, extended the area of crimes punishable by death. To those whose lives were hurtful to the innocent community, mercy could only be shown, so they held, at the expense of those to whom mercy, that is, protection, was really due. Not only all who compassed, or even attempted the lives of others, but all who after repeated smaller punishments still lived the

lives of evildoers, were counted unworthy longer to live,—and this without any attempted distinction of sane or insane,—the existence of the latter being considered even more hopelessly injurious to the State than that of the former, and, on the other hand, less valuable to themselves.

But while the punishment of death was certain and frequent, it was no longer inflicted in the barbarous manner which continued, a ghastly anachronism, through the reign of the tender-hearted Victoria.

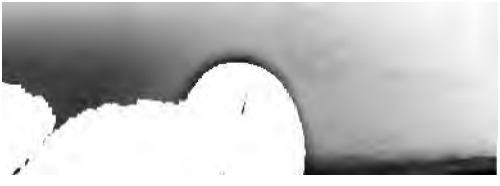
Those whose lives were forfeit were placed for a time—the length of which depended on various cir-

cumstances—in a place of solemn sequestration, to the care of which a society of holy men and women devoted their existence, and which was placed rather under the authority of the Church than of the State. The State, indeed, had done with them; they were already cut off from their place as citizens; it only remained for the Church to lead them with kind hand through paths of penitence and prayer to the door of a new life, a new hope—where this was possible. With some, with many perhaps, the soul seemed already dead before the body.

When the time came, sur-

rounded by a serious company of the "Brethren of Death," whose prayers and solemn hymns made the last moments beautiful to those who were repentant, and awful to those who were hardened, the condemned drank an opiate, which closed their eyes in a painless sleep from which there was no waking, while those about them still prayed for the departing spirit on its way to a higher judgment.

Beautiful histories were told of some who in the quiet of their cells, aided by the gentle ministrations of the Brothers and Sisters, came to see with an anguish of repentance the sinfulness



of their past, and to rejoice in the thought of passing, sprinkled with fresh dews of penitence and forgiveness, away from a world whose temptations had been too strong for them. Of their forfeit lives they made a willing sacrifice, and they were glad to be allowed to lay them down.

Children who had committed crimes, after fitting punishment were placed in settlements where they were kept under strict discipline and carefully instructed, the rudiments of some useful art being added to a simple education in general subjects. Girls were trained in household work, and all, as soon as they were grown

men and women, were removed from these settlements to places where their past was unknown, unless they showed themselves so dyed with their early habits and so resolved to return to them that this would have been harmful to the State.

In these cases, which were very few, they were treated in the same way as the hardened offenders of whom I have just spoken.

There were not wanting intelligent persons to whom the punishment of death for a misused life seemed a terrible and even a wicked thing. Yet, not only had such punishment been in

use for just such offences in the time of Queen Elizabeth and of other sovereigns, but at so late a time as the commencement of the present century, war among civilized nations was considered justifiable, and the profession of a soldier was even held to be a noble and Christian calling. The very women whose tender hearts cried out against the new law would send their young sons away with their blessing to face death in compassing that of other innocent and unwilling victims in a cause for which, often, none of them cared. Those who thus perished in war, believing that it was for their country's honour that

they fought, were among the best and bravest of the nation—men to whom discipline and order were their very breath. Those whom the new law excluded from life were scarcely worthy of the name of men, and more hostile to their country than any of the soldiers of other states.

This then was the course adopted with reference to the Law-Breakers. We must now speak of the Law-Deniers. Anarchy, Socialism, free-land leagues, communistic democracy more or less indigenous, and every shade of Nihilism and Dynamitism introduced from the East and the West, had so long had free course that

a large mass of the population had come to believe practically that might was right, and the problems of the earliest stages of barbarism were staring men in the face as the products of an over-ripe civilization.

It was true, and the young rulers recognized this, that much of the discontent of the poorer classes had had just ground in the indifference and selfish luxury of the rich, but that cause was already in great part removed, and in two ways.

Women as highly educated as men, and now wise enough to see that they were made for better things than the dust of politics,

turned their thoughts to home reforms. Their higher standard of principle and refinement of taste led to a contempt for what was gorgeous or costly in dress or equipage, food or furniture, as essentially vulgar, or at best barbaric. Thus their quiet ways and simple attire left little space to be bridged over as regards outward show between them and the thrifty women of a humbler class, and that space was bridged by kindly intercourse, by knowledge shared, and by the ready sympathy which is the gift of the highest intelligence.

This was one great power for good. The other was

the fact that so many owners of land had devoted large portions of it to sites for Industrial Villages, and even those who had no sympathy for the poor or enthusiasm for the good of their country, partly for fashion's sake, and partly because these schemes proved not only useful to the poor but beneficial to the landowner, joined to aid the great work of withdrawing the population from the towns into the country.

The gradual disuse of steam, with all its dismal accompaniments of blackened skies and unlovely chimneys, allowed of almost all manufactures being carried on under healthy and

cheerful conditions. On every hill, rows of windmills gathered the force which produced electricity and stored it for the use of the village below; while by every stream, and on every shore visited by tides, the forces of water were in the same way brought into a service which, being no longer intermittent, was of permanent and continuous value.

Thus the real misery of the honest poor in England was becoming a thing of the past, and the large class of people whose stock-in-trade was the discontent of others became at once more reckless and more dangerous when, flinging away all disguise and separated from

those whose wrongs had lent colour to their schemes, they appeared under their true flag as the enemies of all law and duty, industry and religion.

The young Cabinet saw at once the way to meet them. Those who would not obey the laws of one country must seek a home in another. Banishment seemed at once the mildest and the most reasonable punishment (if indeed it can be so called),—not transportation to some special spot, but simply exile from England and from all British dominions and colonies —the Great Federation being absolutely united in this important matter—un-

der penalty of death if the banished returned.

On conviction the Anarchist was marked, by an indelible brand in a painless manner, with a red O in sign of outlawry, and received his sentence of banishment—and in this way some thousands of the disaffected and idle were at once removed from our shores.

Some of them were of the lowest and most violent class, who are naturally rude and lawless because bound by no inner law themselves (though, as has been shown, those leading an actually criminal life were dealt with in other ways); and associated with

them, indignant at the new law, and therefore enthusiastically determined to share the fate of the exiled, were men and women of a far higher type, mistaken, yet nobly in the wrong. Some few were poets, historians, religious visionaries, women whose dreams of a millennium were based on a false notion of the origin and essence of law. All these last gave themselves up at once, and stretched out the right hand that had held the pen, or blessed the chalice, or soothed the dying forehead, for the circle in which they gloried as a sign of their fellowship with the oppressed.

At first the result was, of course, that in other countries the Anarchists found hearers for their doctrines and ready adherents to their destructive schemes, the false notion that lawlessness is liberty being one readily welcomed by the unthinking. But one by one the countries to which they had fled followed the precedent of England, and banished from their shores also the men and women of the red right hand. In those days the States of Europe were already bound in a sort of confederation, with an International Court in which matters of common interest were discussed, and

it was agreed that a place must be found for the growing nation of outlaws, who else might justly plead for a home in a law-obeying state as a mere necessity of humanity.

In the terrible era of volcanic action which began about the year 1885 and lasted nearly half a century, many coasts and islands had been submerged, with great loss of human life and of the results of human industry. Among others the beautiful Island of Meliora in the South Pacific had been the scene of the sudden formation of a volcano and of a fearful eruption. It seemed as if the whole heart of the Island

were poured for many days and nights into the sultry sky, and then sank into the sea and was seen no more.

After a period of several years, the captain of a merchant vessel, looking with his corrected chart for the circle of coral reef which marked the place of the lost Island, saw with wonder Meliora re-arisen from the sea, crowned by the wide crater of its fatal mountain and already clothed with brilliant vegetation. It would seem strange that its re-appearance had not been noticed by other vessels, as the trees upon it showed that it must have been some years above

water, but this will not appear remarkable when it is known that no ordinary course for vessels carried them within sight of the Island, and that the new reefs which had been raised around it by the action of the volcano were so dangerous that captains who entered those seas avoided their neighbourhood. The line of coral reef which encircled the Island had not sunk more than a few feet, hence the thick growth of Coco-palms that covered it had not been submerged, and no doubt directly Meliora arose from the waves seeds from these would at once begin to take root and make rapid growth in

that wonderful soil and climate.

When the captain of the "Ville d'Is," driven out of his way by adverse winds, saw the wonder of the restored land, it was at the moment of perplexity of which I have spoken as to where the outlawed nation should find a home.

It was at once resolved by the united governments of Europe that they should be offered transport to this Island—an offer which the most part gladly accepted, chased as they had been from country to country, and very weary of their wandering.

Indeed, what other chance remained for them, since

to enter any civilized country, any country governed by settled rule of law, was to die?

From all points of the compass ships with various flags entered the circle of reefs that surrounded Meliora, and set down their strange passengers on that beautiful shore.

A land large enough for all, fertile as a garden of romance, perfect in climate, and abounding in all they could need for food, clothing and shelter, what more could the outlaws desire?



Chapter II.

"Exile is when a man is for a crime condemned to depart out of the dominion of the commonwealth, or out of a certain part thereof, and during a prefixed time, or for ever, not to return to it; and seemeth not in its own nature, without other circumstances, to be a punishment; but rather an escape, or a public commandment to avoid punishment by flight."—Hobbe's *Leviathan.*

THE first to land in Meliora were a company of English Socialists, with whom a few of the best who so called them-

selves were careful to cast in their lot. These were men of forethought and resource, and the truth that the circumstances of men are made by their inner natures was never more clearly seen than in the difference which soon appeared in the homes of the new settlers. The leader of this elect company was an old Scholar who in his younger days had distinguished himself in many ways, but, from a genuine belief that the medicine of a sick world lay in a socialist creed, had laid aside all that had gained him fame and credit for this one dream, and sealed his choice with the brand.

To him in his old age, after years of desolate wanderings, the thought of a home in a new Atlantis was welcome indeed,—the soft sweet air of the southern seas, the beautiful vegetation and strange fantastic story of the Island awakened the old poetic feelings of his youth, and it seemed as if his mission to the world would here meet fulfilment and find its lost harmony with the earlier longings of his genius and fancy.

Through his help and counsel the first settlement of the land was organized, houses suitable to the climate were built, Indian corn and other crops for

which they had brought a common stock of seed were sown for the coming season, and to each was allotted an equal share of the fruitful land on which there was only so much need to labour as Adam found in Milton's Paradise.

Some of course were more industrious, some more ingenious, than others. Some had less bodily vigour; among these were those of whom I have spoken as the elect few—the old Scholar and a little company of young clerics, "Priests" of the Church of England.

This Church from the time of its disestablishment had begun a new life—it had at once shown its vita-

lity by casting off some of its old disused organisms and by adapting itself in quick sympathy to the needs of a changed order of things.

The young Priests of whom I have spoken believed that men had lost sight of the great communistic idea of early Christianity, and they made themselves poor and homeless for the sake of their creed. True brethren of the Cross they were, not the less willing to cast in their lot with the outlawed because most of these denied the Christian faith with their lips. Some of them they knew acknowledged it in their lives, while in the

multitude who cast away all law and chose evil rather than good, they recognized the lost sheep whom it was their mission if possible to recall.

These men, who were less strong in body than many others, were yet much more skilful in the use they made of the advantages which all shared alike, and even the women, of whom a small company of enthusiasts had arrived, were so wise and industrious in the building of their simple homes and the tilling of their small plots, that the western point of the Island, in which these elect ones took up their abode, became soon a thriving and

pleasant settlement, while the homes of the less intelligent, even of those who were of great bodily strength, were of poorer construction, their lands worse tilled, and an altogether different manner of living and occupation prevailed among them.

And this notwithstanding that the little brotherhood of Priests made no home for themselves beyond a rude shelter from the air before they had built with the best skill they possessed, and with all the help they could persuade others to give them, a church where daily worship of the simplest kind was offered.

Things went for a time very happily; all that the elect company possessed of skill or knowledge they were eager to share with others. The old Scholar of whom I have spoken gave advice in regard to the building of each new dwelling; those whose crops were the largest shared with those who had least, and through the whole little colony in the western part of the Island a common exile produced a common feeling of loyalty to one another, and of desire for the good of the community, to which for a time even those who professed to believe in no moral order yielded. I cannot say that the white

wooden church among the Bread-fruit trees held many worshippers, but at least the Christian Brotherhood was looked upon as a harmless and kindly element in the new society.

Some Russian noblemen and students were among the next arrivals. They were full of enthusiasm for the future of the settlement, though enraged at their banishment, and a little jealous of the established order they found on the island and of the influence of the Scholar and the Priests. The former, by the love and esteem in which he was held by many, and even by the beauty of his venerable countenance,

seemed to them dangerously like a patriarch or chief, and the superiority of the western dwellings was to them a sign of something reactionary. They built their own homes rather carelessly, and gathered little companies together by the side of the Lagoon to whom they talked in low and earnest tones and in excellent English of the beauty of Anarchy and of Nihilism, glorifying the *absence* of certain things as a *presence* more than any religion or philosophy had done before. The "Nothing" of Molinos, the emptiness of Nirvana, would have been far too existent for them.

Their ideas did not always meet with acceptance, for even the more violent of the Socialists could hardly see that there was an object for destructive denunciations in the simple order which seemed to them an assurance of individual freedom.

But a change was coming.

I am not going here to write the history of the great Irish revolution which followed the separation of that country from England. It is well known how terrible that time was, and how, when all men were wearied out and sick to death of the horrors of civil war, there followed a great swing

of the pendulum towards order and high-handed government; they entreated for a king of the Royal Family of England, and a strongly Conservative Cabinet in Dublin banished in large numbers all who remained of the disaffected party.

These were the men who next landed in Meliora. They had been maddened with rage against their own Church in consequence of the wise part taken by the Pope and the Irish bishops against the revolutionary party. Hence they were enemies of all creeds and forms of religion, and they were also of course filled with the old bitterness

against all of English race.

At the same time a great number of German and Belgian Socialists of the most violent kind were also landed on the Island, and they found no difficulty in making friends at once with the Irish company, the German system of education having made them as perfect in the use of foreign tongues as it left them ignorant of the first principles of moral law and of all sound theories of government and political economy.

These new-comers settled themselves in the south-east of the Island, where there were large forests of Coco-palms, Bananas, and

Bread-fruit trees, which they began at once to fell in order to use the timber for their houses, and this in so wasteful a way that they cut down those trees which were valuable for fruit, but of slight use as timber, quite as freely as the others. Indeed, for such houses as they wanted much smaller wood was sufficient. The abundant Hybiscus would have supplied all their material in that climate, where solid and substantial dwellings are entirely needless.

Not content with a reckless destruction in their own district, they did not scruple to begin cutting wood from the coco-bearing reef which

fringed the Lagoon far to the westward of their settlement.

A gentle remonstrance from those whom I will name the Western party called forth feelings of anger and unreason in these men of violent ideas, and there arose among them, it is scarcely known how, an idea of building ships in which they might go out and subdue some neighbouring islands. At the same time they had a scheme for constructing defences on their own shore against the attacks they might in this manner provoke. And, later, they showed signs of erecting a sort of stockade which, with the abrupt line

of the great mountain and its outlying ridges of broken crater, would separate them from the Western settlement. At first, as has been said, the scheme which led to their cutting down the forest was chiefly one for shipbuilding. To this the Western party strongly opposed themselves.

What indeed was the use of such a project? All the islands of the South Pacific, in which signs of their great future were already foreshadowing, were members of the British Federation. To land on any one of them could only mean a defiance of the whole power of that Federation, some fresh laws of repression, and

possibly the presence of troops in the island.

And this, a mean and futile struggle with the laws of a strong country instead of the peaceful future for which the Island might have looked—a future not of conflict, but of freedom and peace, so the Western enthusiasts believed—a future in which every man should be a law to himself, in which each should willingly work for all—a future from which the old world, with its worn-out notions, should learn this lesson—that to be without laws was not to be lawless, and that freedom from forms of external govern ment did not mean slavery to selfishness and passion.

Such counsels of perfection were hardly fitted for the wilder notions of the Southern and Eastern settlers. The remonstrances of the West were met with many an angry cry. From the Irish that they had not come round the world to submit again to English rule; from the Russians that they would not be governed by priests; from the Germans every possible argument with no possible ground.

After a time a sort of parliament was convened in an amphitheatre formed by one of the craters of the great mountain. No one could think of this strange place of assembly as having

been so lately given over to the two fiercer elements of those primal four in which the old world believed, the rush of angry Fire, or the wash of stormy Waves under which it had lain a little while, but long enough for the busy coral creatures to have claimed it for a foundation. Now it seemed as if Earth from the beginning had held it in her green arms, and as if the gentle Air had immemorially carried to and fro the sleepy odours of its wonderful flowers.

Here they met, the Western party standing loyally round their leaders and chief speakers—the old Scholar of whom I have spoken, the

young Priests, and a large company of English working men, who believed heartily in the communistic idea. I will not say that as they discussed the affairs of their Island nationality and opinion always kept together. There were some Englishmen of a low type who applauded the violent and warlike party; there was a company of the wiser and more educated Russians who were convinced by the words of the West; there were moderate men among the Germans and Belgians; but the Irish were mostly for the axe and the sword. It was clearly shown at this time that the Moderates were in the minority;

there was no force to which they could appeal, and, as the sun set behind the ridge on which they stood, they turned and went rather sadly homeward.

Still there seemed one effort to be made. The Western party was now, through the opposition of the South, bound by a real unity of thought. They could, at any rate, set themselves to persuade by individual converse some of the other side; indeed, as I have said, some of the better class of Russian Nihilists had already been convinced—these might influence their own people.

So for a while, though without much hope, milder

counsels were urged here and there by messengers from the West, who went singly across the hills to speak to all who would listen. The young Priests even endeavoured to recall some of the settlers of the South to thoughts of duty and heavenly wisdom, and preached the gladness of a life in which each lived for his fellows, in contrast with the misery of that state in which each strove for his own gain, wrangling like brute beasts. But though some few, touched by words that recalled an innocent past, inclined at least to consider their meaning, there were but few who were ready to receive them,

and to most the Cross seemed but a worn-out emblem of the creed of oppressors.

Finally, the sole result of all these efforts was to rouse the opposition of the Southern leaders, who went to and fro denouncing those of the West, inflaming the passions of their own followers by violent appeals and angry denunciations, till that day came which all had foreseen—how could it indeed not come? Yet it seemed, so said those who remained to tell the story, as if so horrible a thing could not really happen in that sweet, languid air, under that warm sun, tempered by soft winds and

weet with a thousand flowers. Conflict and tumult and cruelty—what had they to do with such a scene?

It was a Sunday morning. All the Western folk were gathered in and round the church, whose open arcaded sides allowed those without to join freely the worship of those within. The church indeed was too large for those who mostly cared to enter it, but to-day the sense of coming trouble brought the whole community together.

Suddenly upon the sound of prayer broke in the noisy shouts and hideous laughter of their enemies; a wild multitude came rushing

through the trees, and then forming a ring round the church and the kneeling crowd, they called for those they most hated in all that company—the Scholar and the Priests.

The old Scholar, if the truth be told, was one who had no love for creeds; he cared little for churches, though these Churchmen he had come to honour as men—good men, wise, gentle and true of heart. He took pleasure in believing that he was no Christian, not knowing himself. For in truth he loved the Christ in His poor, and in these men His servants, and he had long lived, though, as has been said, not thinking

it, the life of the Cross. Self had long been put away, so far as it can be by any still dwelling in the flesh, only he had not ever looked up into the face of Him who led him by the hand. He was therefore not within the church, but a little away, under a Bread-fruit tree.

But when he heard them call his name, he came and stood upon the steps at the door and spoke to the leaders of the crowd. He said that they might do as they would with him, but he would entreat them once again to consider what was good for the peace and safety of the whole Island. He begged them to spare

the Priests who had come there to serve them, to teach their children, and to help all with wise counsels and the example of virtuous lives. While he spoke, these men, having reverently finished their prayers, came and stood beside him. Then the crowd broke out in wild cries and thrust them back into the church, while some of their number, with a sudden inspiration from the Evil Will, set fire to the slight wooden roof of the porch.

It was but for a little while that the flames ran round the dry, thin walls and mounted the wooden spire, and rose, a column of clear, pale scarlet a-

gainst the brilliant green of the tall Bread-fruit trees. Those within the church saw that there was no escape, and the youngest of the Priests, a boyish fellow who in England had thought much about stoles and albs, quietly gave out the hymn they had meant to sing at the end of the service. All joined with one voice, and only as the flames wrapped round and choked them the sound of their singing died away—no groan, no cry for help, no struggle to escape, but just one solemn, triumphant martyr song, and all was still. The old Scholar died on the steps of the altar, as they knew by his signet

ring, an antique of great beauty, on which was engraved the figure of a man bound by his outstretched hands and feet, supposed to represent Prometheus chained upon the rock.



Chapter III.

"This is the righteous maid, the comforter."

THUS ended the hopes of the West. The time that followed was one of wild confusion. Violence was the only law, and those who escaped in that terrible day yielded themselves in hopeless misery to the disorders they

could not avert or control. Some few there always were who longed for order and peace, and mourned in silence for their lost leaders; but none had the courage to speak out.

It was in these days that a ship of strange appearance was seen approaching the entrance of the Lagoon, which, passing quickly round to the north of the Island, a bare, rocky region not yet inhabited, landed there a large number of passengers, and before the rest of the inhabitants could cross the mountain and discover who were the newcomers, the ship which brought them had vanished again into the open sea.

A stealthy departure and scarcely to be wondered at, for the government of Burmah had grave fears whether even on the Island of Outlaws its passengers could be welcomed or endured. They were a large company of an entirely lawless robber race known at that time by the name of Dacoits—the terror of the Burmese country.

These men soon found that they had been put ashore on the least fertile part of the Island, and they began to come over the heights and plunder the older settlers for whatever they needed, even driving them from their homes and taking possession of these.

There was no government or settled order to which anyone could appeal —"each man for himself" was the only rule. The number of the early settlers was much diminished by the years of strife and violence, and though some of those who came as children to the Island were now growing to man's and woman's estate, these were not many, and the fact that among the older settlers there were some who had families was a great source of weakness to them as against the new-comers, for even the most lawless of the old Southern men dreaded the attacks of these wild marauders upon

their feeble women and children.

Thus the presence of the Dacoits wrought a change at once on the island.

The common trouble to which they were now exposed inclined the earlier settlers to look upon one another with more friendly eyes, and indeed I think by this time they were all beginning a little to weary of conflict, and so they drew together and determined on measures in which they should all unite for driving the Dacoits back to the North, or at any rate reducing them to some sort of subjection.

But this was by no means easy. Men who had no

scruple at midnight murder, and delighted in the torture of little children in the sight of their mothers, could not be met by any force but that of perfectly organized and strong repression, and the leaders of the party who now represented the order of the Island began to dread whether they would not indeed all perish at the hands of these savage invaders. It might be so, but all that was best in these men rose up to meet the danger and to defend their homes. They were beginning to understand the meaning of union, of some sort of law, of the sacrifice of the will of each one to the good of the

whole, when a new thing happened.

Some Dacoits who had just been driven back from a plundering expedition were men who had learnt a few words of English, and as they sullenly retired they uttered [terrible threats against their opponents, which they said they would perform when the next moon was round, for then ships would come bringing their friends, and they made signs to show that these would come in great numbers.

Here were indeed tidings of despair for the settlers. They met once again in the green amphitheatre in which they had been convened before, and many of them

remembered sadly how things had changed for the worse since that day. The presence of this terror made them all of one accord, though there seemed nothing to be done. The shipbuilding projects had been long abandoned among the pre-occupations of their internal conflicts, and the little boats in which they crossed the Lagoon were perfectly useless for long voyages at this time of year; but indeed, since all could not leave the Island, none of them would dream of deserting their companions in misery.

Further, if other reason were needed for their remaining, all but the children

and quite young men and women bore the brand which made life impossible for them elsewhere.

And now a voice was heard among the anxious company to which all listened, for most of them knew it well. It was a woman's voice, the voice of one who came among the first settlers of the West, drawn there not by political sympathy or communistic fellow-feeling with them, but simply by the thought that here, if anywhere, would be sick souls to heal, sick bodies to tend, and women and little children needing help and care. She was called "Our Sister," and no one had learnt any-

thing of her family or her history. Of those whom she comforted in sickness or trouble, each one felt assured that she held the creed his mother had taught him as a little child; some would have sworn she belonged to the Church of Rome; the Russians claimed her as theirs; some wild Welsh Home-Rulers were certain that she belonged to the Primitive Methodist Connexion; and a company of rough men from the English iron districts were still more certain that her gentle voice was that of a Quakeress from a secluded Yorkshire valley.

It did not matter.

She had escaped, almost

alone of the inmost circle of the West, at the time of the burning of the church, by the fact that she was that day nursing a little child who was sick of a fever and whose mother had just died. Since that time evil habits and careless living had led to a great spread of this terrible disease, and the Sister had gone from one sick bed to another bringing medicine and the healing of her presence, and there were those who said that something miraculous lay in the touch of her hands and the whisper of her prayer.

It was her voice that spoke in the midst of the people that day. She stood

on a little mound among the tangled growth of scented flowers—almost amidst of the great amphitheatre—and in the perfect hush of her hearers and the stillness of the clear windless air every syllable was heard.

She said that these troubles had come upon them, as they knew, through their own folly and dissensions; that they might now, if they were indeed united, resist their enemies and oblige them to live peaceably in their own part of the Island, getting their supplies from the northern reef, which was very fruitful, and not crossing the hills; that if, taking warning from the weakness

which their disorders had brought, they would set themselves to strengthen some simple form of government, they might even yet live peaceable and happy lives on the Island. If the new company of Dacoits found them thus united and strong they might submit to the same rule as the others; but alas! the moon was near the full. There was but little time for such measures, even if all did their best.

But there was one weapon they had all long neglected, the weapon of Prayer, and she entreated them all to kneel down around her.

The wild multitude thus taken unawares in a serious

mood did not bethink them of scoffing, indeed they loved her, and that was enough.

Her sweet, piercing voice seemed to touch the cloudless sky as she confessed the sins of that company and acknowledged their need of all things; and with words that claimed as the gift certain to be given by a loving father's hand, what others would timidly have asked as a doubtful favour from a distant king, she seemed to lay hold at once with a strong hand on all the infinite help hidden in the storehouse of the Heavenly Will.

She claimed for that company, not safety only,

but blessings and gladness undreamed of by any; and when she ended, a great "Amen" went up from all that strange congregation.

At this moment a wild cry was heard from those who stood on the eastern ridge of the crater, which commanded the sea and the opening in the reef by which vessels entered the Lagoon. A ship whose lines were but too well known was in sight: the Dacoits were coming.

The whole assembly climbed up the sides of the crater and on to the long ridge of hill beyond, and stood looking seaward. The ship came quickly nearer—when those who

knew the coast observed that, instead of following the winding channel of deep water that leads to the opening of the Lagoon, they were hurrying on to a great sunken reef to the north of this, on which the sea, being unusually calm, was not breaking as it was wont to do at most seasons.

They saw a crowd of Dacoits rush to the shore making signs to those on board, but it was too late. The ship struck, and sank at once in the fathomless depth of water outside the reef. The Dacoits on shore swam across the Lagoon, and running over the reef again, swam towards the sunken ship, and dived in

the hope of saving their friends. But during this little space of time, the tide, which turns there very suddenly, brought great waves again to break over the sunken rocks and on the outer edge of the reef, and many of those who swam out to the wreck were drowned.

Why the ship took the wrong course no one could ever know; perhaps, having made the voyage before, the captain ventured without a pilot.

To all who stood on the mountain ridge and saw what happened in that short space of time, it seemed only that their prayer had been answered.

Chapter IV.

"Love, and do what thou wilt."

THE next day another great meeting was convened.

Their deliverance and the manner of it had wrought a great change in many, especially in the less educated of the community, who experienced at that time a *conver-*

sion—that reversal of the natural selfish state which makes self come last instead of first in the thoughts of a man, and which leads him also to realize a Presence in the Unseen. I mention this because it very much changed the nature of their deliberations. I do not say that these conversions would have had a lasting effect but for certain events which followed.

All desired a settled order in the Island. Those who were not truly in principle Anarchists, but rather Democrats, proposed some form of social contract by which they might "confer all their power and strength

upon one man, or upon one assembly of men, that might reduce all their wills, by plurality of voices, unto one will; which is as much as to say, to appoint one man, or assembly of men, to bear their Person: and every one to owne, and acknowledge himself to be Author of whatsoever he that so beareth their person shall Act, or cause to be acted in those things which concerne the common Peace and Safetie; and therein to submit their Wills, every one to his Will, and their Judgments to his Judgment. This is more than consent or concord; it is a real Unitie of them all, in one and the same

Person, made by covenant of every man with every man, in such manner, as if every man should say to every man, 'I authorize and give up my right of governing myself to this Man or to this assembly of men, on this condition, that thou give up thy right to him and authorize all his actions in like manner.'"

These words are originally those of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury, and these, or something like these, were spoken on this occasion by a young Englishman of gentle birth and manners, but of very ungentle notions when first he came to the Island. He was not one of those who

came of their own free will, but as a branded man, having continued, after many warnings, to gather large companies of men in the London squares, and to exhort them to Revolution.

He was now, notwithstanding, as we have seen, rather old-fashioned in his ideas, and his proposal was met by not a little opposition. Who, it was asked, should be the governing body? How chosen? Who should make, and who enforce, the laws? All the old well-worn, yet not worn-out difficulty about elections, and minorities, and oligarchies, seemed to appear in forecast on the Island, which

at least had never known these evils; and the young man, as the argument proceeded, felt himself to have been in the wrong.

But the voice which on this day made itself heard with the most clearness and decision was that of a Russian Prince, who was persuaded as firmly as he had ever been that in Anarchy—absence of all government—lay the only true order of society. He had always acknowledged that to this end certain principles of morality recognized by the whole community, were necessary. He had believed, on first coming to the Island, that the mere absence of outward law

would develop in men that natural morality from which, under the blight of government, they had fallen away; and he had opposed the work of the Priests of the West on the ground that the artificial restraints of religion are as fatal as civil enactments to the free growth of this natural virtue. But he had seen what sort of fruit was borne by common human nature when first left in a wild garden. His soul had been awakened to find that the morality of which he had dreamed, kindled and made living could be no other than the life of the Cross.

In truth, like the old

Scholar of the Western settlement, his heart had long been dwelling in the place of lowly service and of death to self, without knowing the meaning of such a life, or putting it into the words of the Christian faith; for the Christian faith that he had been taught had been shut up in sacred books and disguised in sacred images, and so hidden from his eyes.

But on the evening before this convention, after the great deliverance, he had gone up the western slope of the mountain and had found the Sister sitting in silent meditation at the door of her house, wearied with all the anxieties and

events of the day, and with the reaction that comes to all high natures after times of tension and excitement. The thought of the drowned Dacoits, of the unsettled state of the Island, of the wickedness that abounded, and of her own helplessness for good, weighed on her sensitive spirit. She was in Elijah's mood when he said, "Oh, that I now might die!"

To those who feel weary and wanting all things, the call is often to work and to give; and so it was that evening with the Sister. They spoke together by the door of her house till the full moon dropped from the height of the nor-

thern sky towards the western sea; and as they talked the things unseen seemed the only realities. The high hope and faith in which the Sister had long lived and moved were communicated in that hour to the seeking soul of the Prince; his whole being rose up to greet the new vision of the Best; and when he took his leave of the teacher to whom he owed so much, it was not to return at once to his home by the southern shore. He climbed by a steep path to the mountain top, and there, till the moon set and dawn came over the sea, he communed with his own heart and swore a solemn

allegiance to the Master whom he had chosen.

To-day, full of hope and confidence, he rose among the people, and laid before them his scheme of a Christian Anarchy—a society of men set free from all outward law, set free from the bondage of self and of evil desires, because the willing servants of a holy Lord.

As we have seen, he was not the first to speak in the assembly; his old restless desire to make his voice heard was gone; he was clothed with a new humility. The cause for which he pleaded was not his, but that of One who hastes not:—

"Day by day,
And year by year He tarrieth: little need
The Lord should hasten."

It has been shown that the people were ready in heart for such an appeal. There was not one voice raised against him; each seemed fired by a high enthusiasm for the good of all; each eager only that the highest will should be done.

This will not seem strange to those who realize the excitement of the times just past, and who remember how frequent in the history of religion has been the sudden awakening, under strong feeling, of large multitudes of men. I will not

Faith from the words and thoughts with which the memories of the Sister and some others were stored.

These were held all the more precious because they had to be told by one to another, and told again and again, till in the hearts of all were embedded as shining jewels fragments of perfect truth and flashes of mystical insight. Dearest to all were the parable of the Vine and Its branches, the Story of the Cross, the "Sermon on the Mount," and many sayings such as these: "The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life;" "He that loveth his life shall lose it;" many

words of St. Paul, and especially those which tell of the struggle of the soul to get free from the only real tyranny, and the splendid anarchy of the slaves of Christ; many sayings of Thomas à Kempis, of Tauler, of Molinos, and of Marcus Aurelius, dear to the heart of the Sister; many fragments of poems and hymns such as she loved and had learnt; many beautiful old hymns which some of the wives of the German Socialists remembered and sang. But it would not be possible even to hint at the chosen words which ruled the lives of that happy community, every voice in which swelled

the sweet hymn of praise which rose at morn and even among the Bread-fruit groves. They did not assemble to worship or to sing, for they sang and worshipped everywhere.

No one called anything his own; and each was eager to find opportunities of helping others with his strength or his substance.

But as to the Dacoits, concerning them even the Prince was led to doubt the fitness of Anarchy. They were not, indeed, now so strong, or the rest of the community so weak, that they could not be forced to submit to laws; but they did not seem able to understand the very rudiments

of that inner law which he saw was needful to the peace of a country ordered on the principles of which we have spoken.

So they were taken in calm weather in the Lagoon boats to a small neighbouring island, where they would find plenty of food, but no large timber of which boats might be built; and they were left there to work out for themselves the problem just solved on Meliora.

How long the Anarchy, which was truly a Theocracy, would have continued in unbroken peace cannot be known. It is possible that, though the children of the first settlers were

passionately eager for settled order, and enthusiastically religious, their children might show a return of evil tendencies, and that those who did not remember the first fearful days of strife in the Island might wilfully have roused again a spirit of disorder; for the world and all the spheres mount only in upward spirals toward that point of the Heavens where they shall rest at last, and are turning always to the same point again, only a little higher than before.

What did happen was this.

Not long after the time of which I have written, the Sister having died, and

been buried at her desire high up on the mountain, the Prince went one evening to sit by her grave awhile and to gather strength by communing with the spirit that had first led him into the way of gladness.

It had been a sultry day, and the breeze that was wont to cool the Island when the sun went down was this day asleep; no breath lifted the heavy air.

The heart of the Prince was mournful too; only the hidden help which never fails upheld him in the vague depression which stole over him.

Then he heard suddenly a strange rumbling sound in the mountain under him;

the earth shook, and as he sprang to his feet he saw a horrible sight — the sea drawn back from the reef, sucked from the great Lagoon, and then rushing in upon the Island and surging up over the reef, over the fringe of Palms, over all the peaceful homes below. Twice this was repeated as he staggered down from the highest point of the mountain; and when the violence of the shock was over, the crater lay at his feet a salt lagoon, and over all the fruitful plain the sea lay deep and still.

He alone was left of all that land's inhabitants.

To a nature like his there was nothing terrible

in solitude, nor did the whole of this awful event seem to him so sad as it would have been to hear one evil word from the lips of a child.

He lived for some years after this a life of meditation and peace, finding just enough food to supply his need among the fruits of the higher mountain forests; and one day, in his extreme old age, a ship's boat seeking water entered the Lagoon. He was taken on board, and he brought with him a manuscript which he had written on slips of the bark of trees, relating the history of the Island. From his own lips yet more of the story was gathered and

written down by a Jesuit father who was returning in the ship from a mission to the newly-settled Antarctic Continent.

There is no more to be told. The old Prince died on the voyage, glad to depart as soon as he had told his tale.

He had come to see many things clearly in his lonely years on the mountain height. What these things were, beyond what has been written here, he told to the Jesuit father—under the seal of confession.



Notes.



NOTES.

Page 22.

HOW little any thought in those happy days from what quarter the storm of invasion would come, or how the whole order of the civilized world would be once more sunk under waves of barbarism! We might now indeed despair, only that as from each such wave in ages past a better world has risen than that which went before, from the depth of our trouble now may rise the best of all—

the new earth to which the new Heaven shall come down.

Page 26.

A very interesting paper in a magazine of last century by Professor Seeley was the first prophecy of this European Court. See *Macmillan's Magazine*, March, 1871.

Page 37.

The women.—Of course I do not here allude to the wives of the Anarchists, of whom some accompanied their husbands.

Page 48.

Troops.—This must not be understood as if national armies were then existing. The United States of Europe and America maintained a large military force, which was sent hither and thither, where needed, as representing the Power which preserved the order of the civilized world

and controlled the still savage or unruly.

Page 63.

Burmah had before this time ceased to be governed by England, having insisted on "Home Rule."

Page 78.

The now reduced number of the Dacoits was felt to be no longer a cause of danger if the rest of the society were ordered and strong; for it will hereafter be shown that even a free association for the ordering of a state must be able to deal in some way with the disorderly.



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